OSTRANDER, YALE & McDONNELL

DEADSHOT™

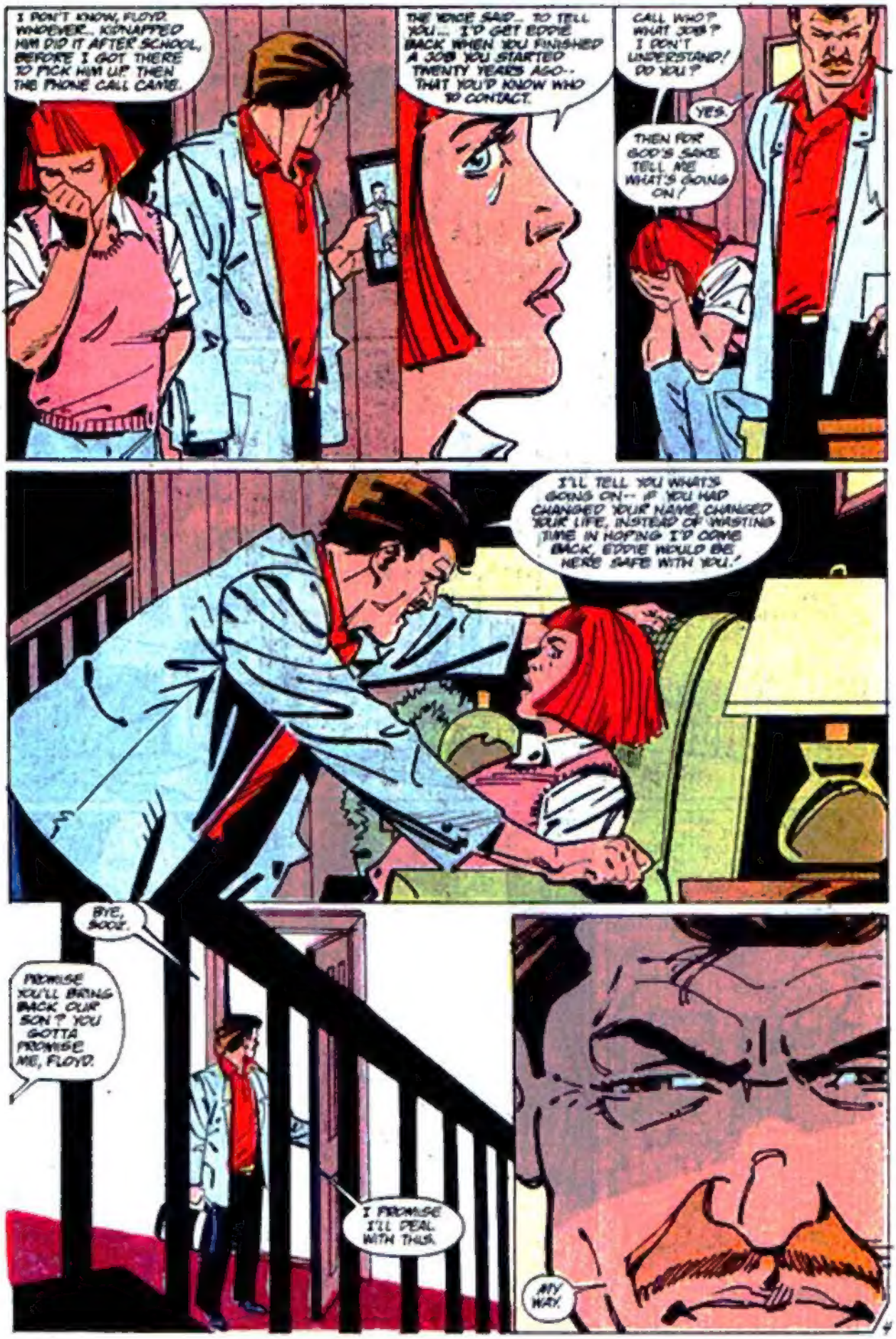
"SEARCH"

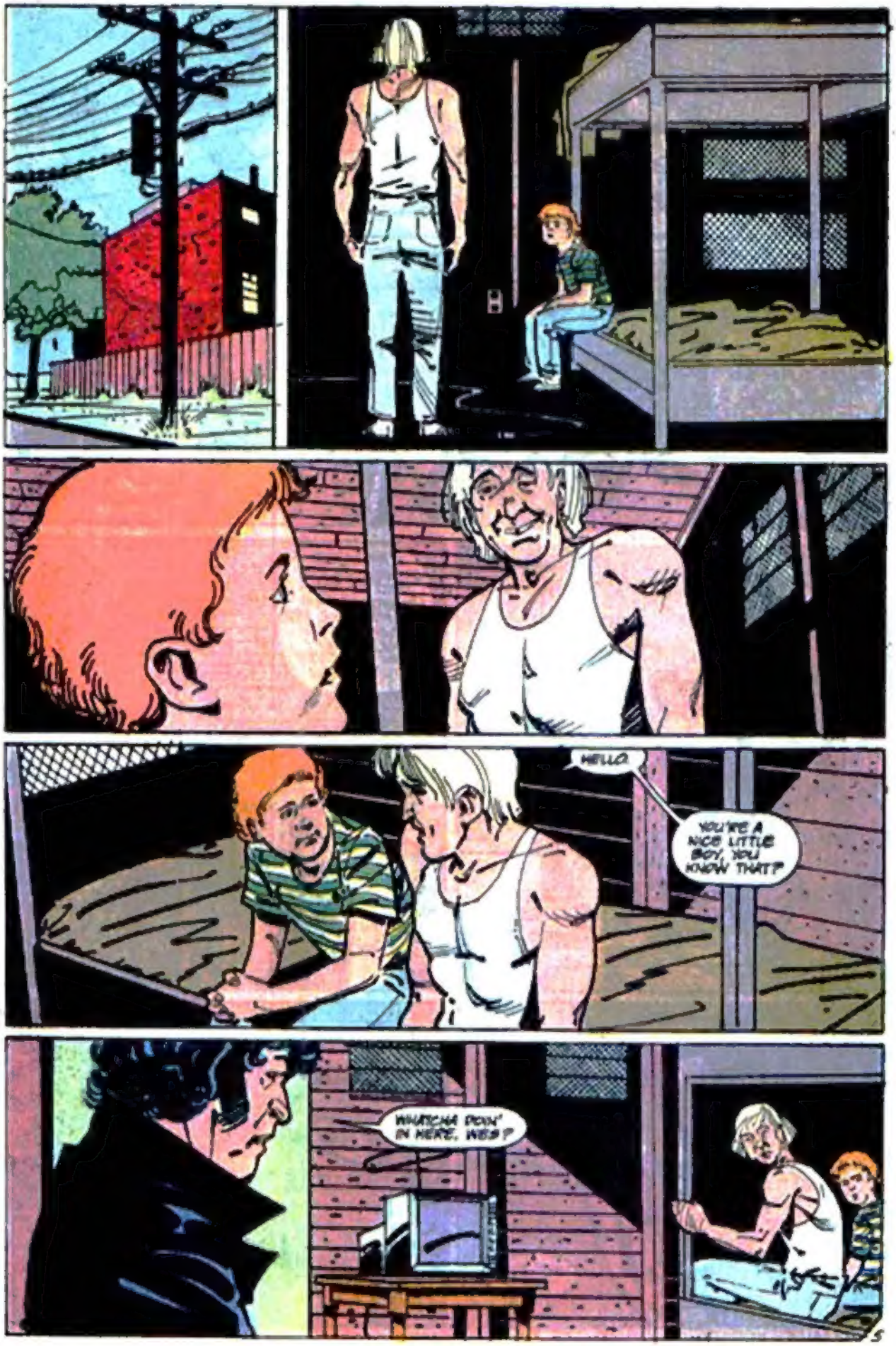
FOUR ISSUE MINI-SERIES

DEADSHOT 2 Published monthly and Copyright © 1988 DC Comics Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10103. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. Advertising Representative: Print Advertising Representatives Inc., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017. (212) 391-1400. Printed in U.S.A.
DC Comics Inc. A Warner Communications Company

KNOCK!
WHO IS IT?
ME, BOOZE. OPEN UP.
FLOYD!

YOU CAME. YOU CAME.. I'M SO GLAD YOU CAME!
YEAH, OKAY. I'M HERE. LET'S GO IN AND TALK.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT -- THAT FAT SLOB ACTUALLY SENT ON MY LETTER AND YOU CAME, FLOYD. I WASN'T SURE YOU WOULD
I GOT IT. I'M HERE.
LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A THING SINCE I LEFT.
NO, I...
SHOULD'VE. SHOULD'VE CHUCKED IT ALL AND STARTED FRESH. SOME-PLACE ELSE. NEW NAME. THE WORKS.
GOES AGAINST MY GRAIN, FLOYD. I THINK LOYALTY OUGHT TO COUNT FOR SOME-THING IN THIS WORLD.
YOU'RE FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE, BOOZ. IT'S OVER.
YOU'RE HERE NOW, AIN'T YA?
NOT BECAUSE OF YOU. I'M NOT.
YOUR NOTE SAID SOMEONE SNATCHED THE KID.
WHO?


I DON'T KNOW, FLOYD. WHOEVER... KIDNAPPED HIM DID IT AFTER SCHOOL, BEFORE I GOT THERE TO PICK HIM UP. THEN THE PHONE CALL CAME.
THE VOICE SAID... TO TELL YOU... I'D GET EDDIE BACK WHEN YOU FINISHED A JOB YOU STARTED TWENTY YEARS AGO-- THAT YOU'D KNOW WHO TO CONTACT.
CALL WHO? WHAT JOB? I DON'T UNDERSTAND! DO YOU?
YES.
THEN FOR GOD'S SAKE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON!
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S GOING ON-- IF YOU HAD CHANGED YOUR NAME, CHANGED YOUR LIFE, INSTEAD OF WASTING TIME IN HOPING I'D COME BACK, EDDIE WOULD BE HERE SAFE WITH YOU!
BYE, BOOZE.
PROMISE YOU'LL BRING BACK OUR SON? YOU GOTTA PROMISE ME, FLOYD.
I PROMISE I'LL DEAL WITH THIS.
ANY WAY.


HELLO
YOU'RE A NICE LITTLE BOY, YOU KNOW THAT?
WHATCHA DOIN' IN HERE, WEB?

I WUZN'T DOIN' NUTHIN', DANNY. JUST SAYIN' HELLO WAS ALL.

NO! YOU DO NOT JUST SAY HELLO, YOU UNNERSTAN' ME, WES?!
YOU DO NOT VISIT THIS BOY, YOU DO NOT LOOK AT THIS BOY UNLESS I SAY YOU CAN! DO YOU UNNERSTAN'?! YOU GET IT?!
SURE, DANNY! WHATEVER YOU SAY!

DAMN FREAKIN' RIGHT IT'S WHATEVER I SAY!

I PROMISED MA BEFORE SHE DIED WE WUZ GONNA GET YOU HELP AND WE ARE. BUT ONLY IF YOU DO AS I SAY! NOW GET OUTA HERE!

BYE-BYE, EDDIE.

"THIS IS THE TOWN THAT FLOYD'S FATHER BUILT.
TRACKS
LAWTON

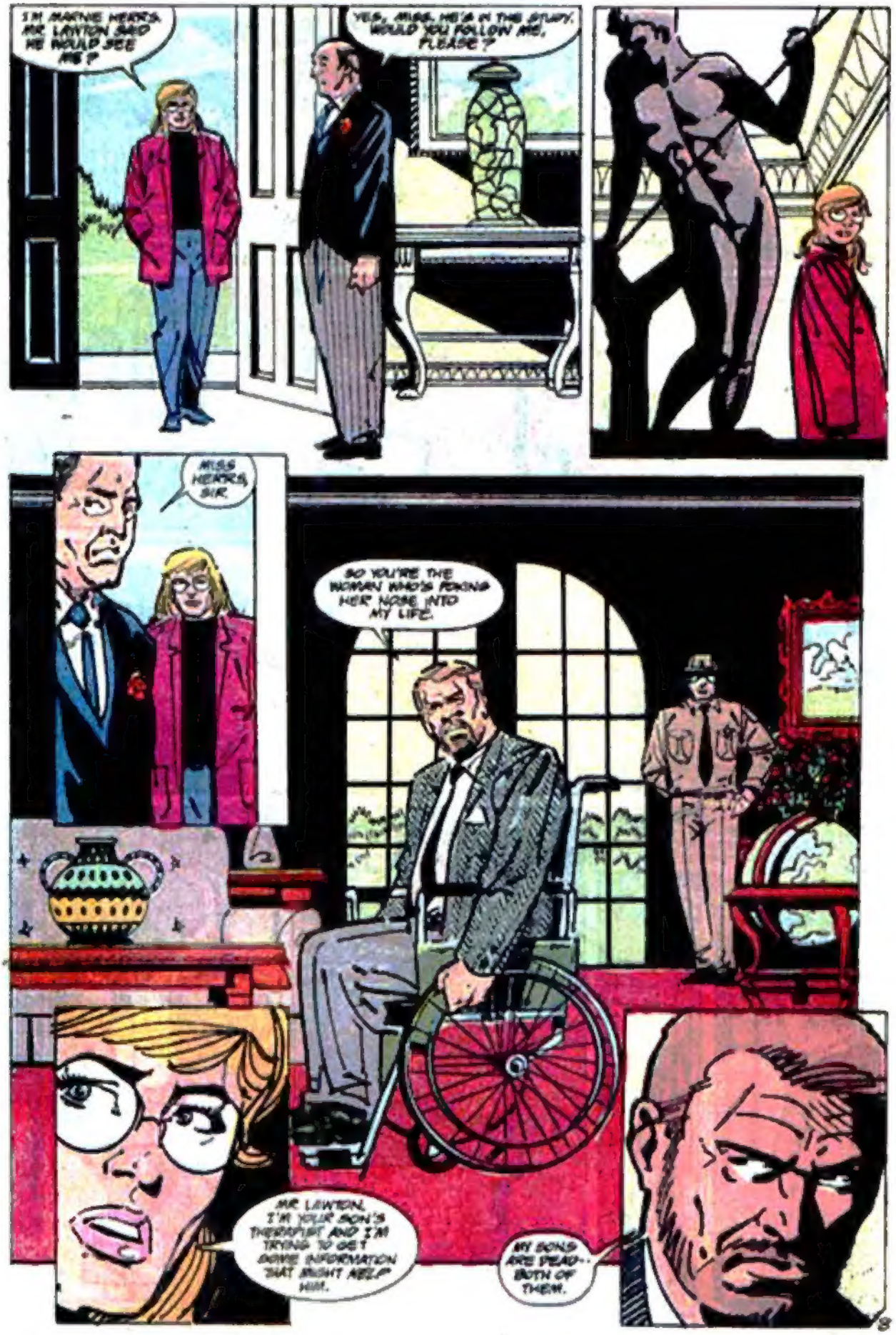
"THIS IS THE HOUSE THAT FLOYD'S FATHER BUILT.

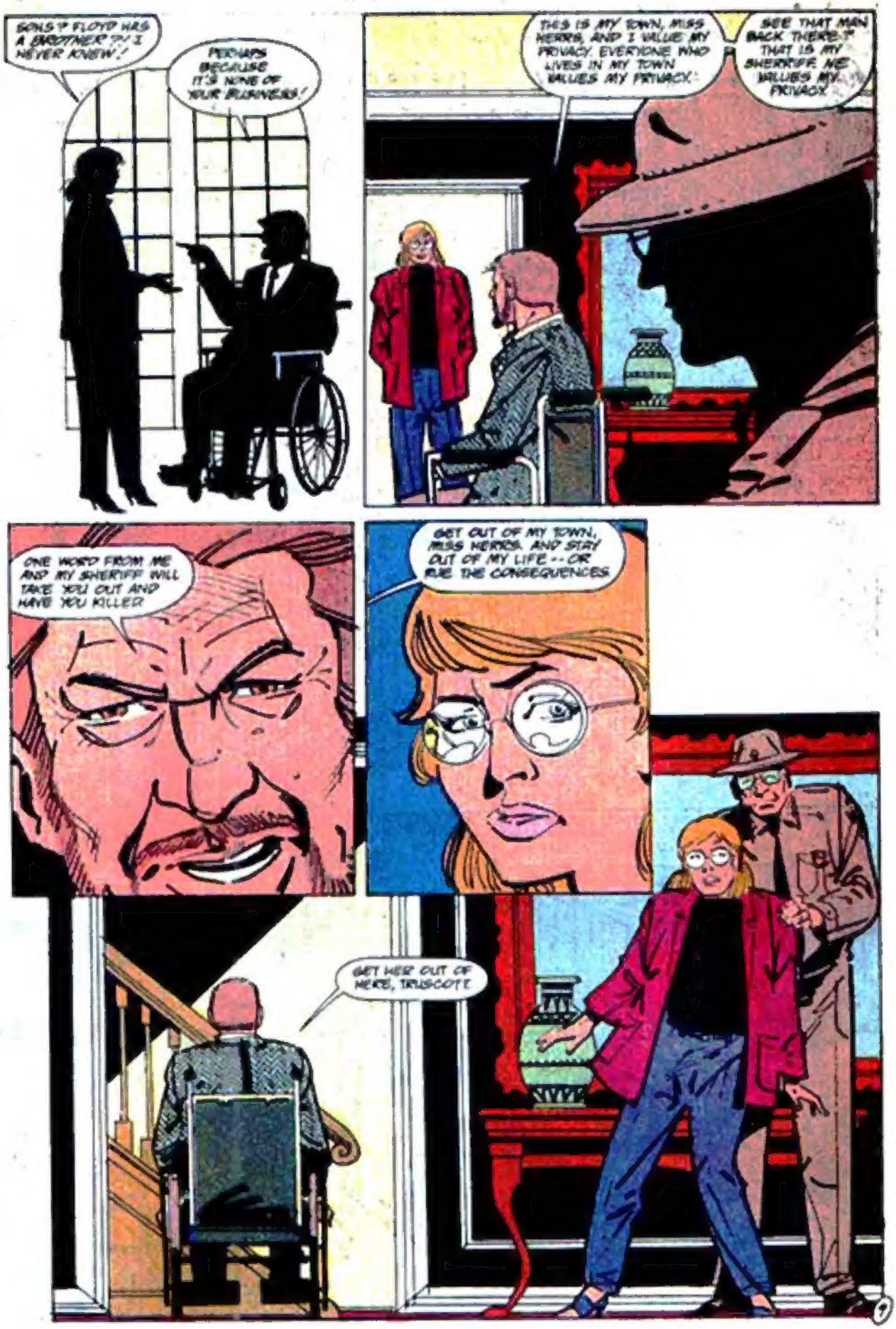
"THIS IS THE FACE OF FLOYD LAWTON'S THERAPIST. SHE'S ONE FRUSTRATED LADY BECAUSE SHE'S BEEN TRYING TO SEE FLOYD'S FATHER FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND BEEN REFUSED AN 'AUDIENCE'.

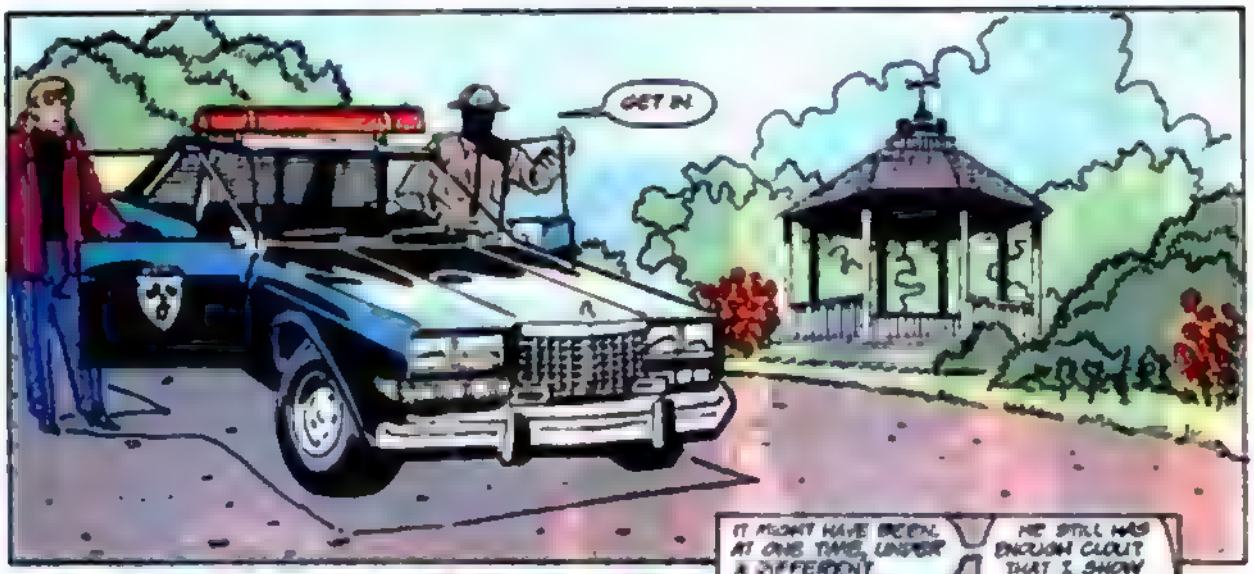
"SHE'S ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM BELLE RIVE, PURSUING FLOYD'S BACKGROUND, CONVINCED THAT THE KEY TO HELPING HER PATIENT LIES IN HIS PAST.

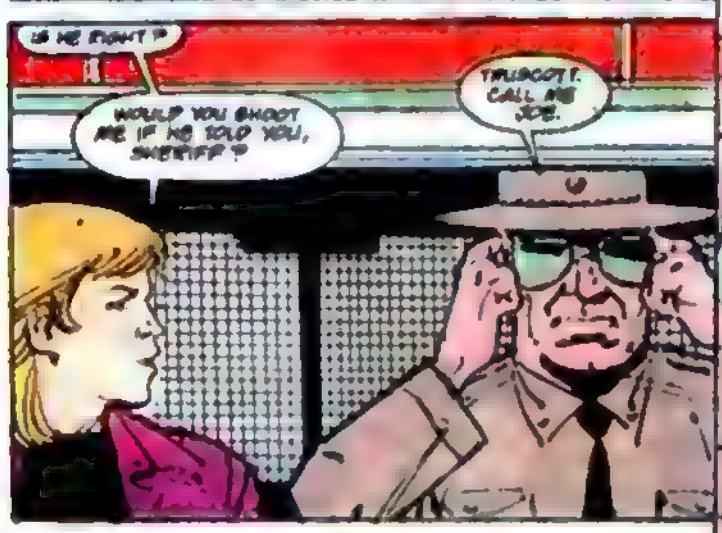
"SHE'S TAKEN A LEAVE OF ABSENCE BECAUSE HER SUPERIOR RE-MOVED HER FROM FLOYD'S CASE. HE SAYS SHE HAS GOTTEN TOO EMOTION-ALLY INVOLVED WITH HER PATIENT.

"I THINK THAT'S TRUE.
"I'M HER."

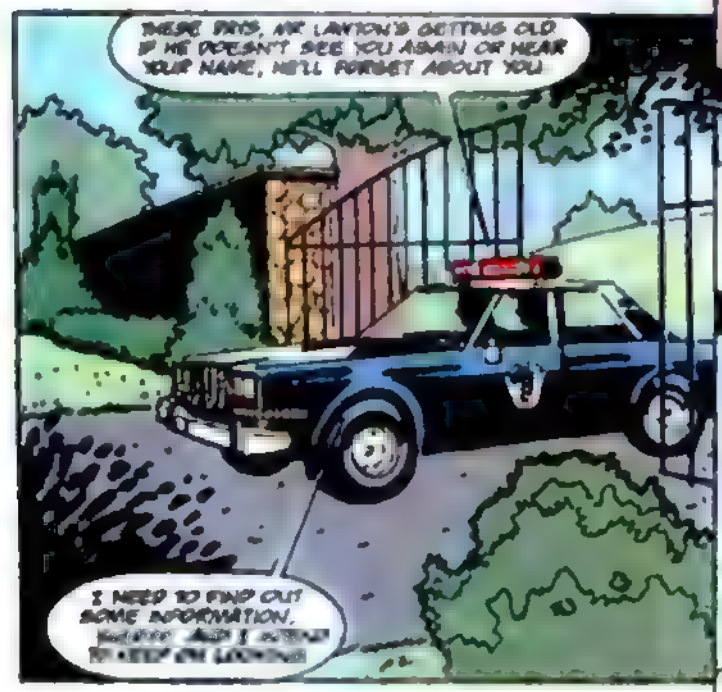

I'M MARNIE HEATH. MR. LAWTON SAID HE WOULD SEE ME?
YES, MISS. HE'S IN THE STUDY. WOULD YOU FOLLOW ME, PLEASE?
MISS HEATH, SIR.
SO YOU'RE THE WOMAN WHO'S POKING HER NOSE INTO MY LIFE.
MR. LAWTON, I'M YOUR SON'S THERAPIST AND I'M TRYING TO GET SOME INFORMATION THAT MIGHT HELP HIM.
MY SONS ARE DEAD... BOTH OF THEM.


SONS? FLOYD HAS A BROTHER?! I NEVER KNEW!
PERHAPS BECAUSE IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!
THIS IS MY TOWN, MISS HERRIS, AND I VALUE MY PRIVACY. EVERYONE WHO LIVES IN MY TOWN VALUES MY PRIVACY.
SEE THAT MAN BACK THERE? THAT IS MY SHERIFF. HE VALUES MY PRIVACY.
ONE WORD FROM ME AND MY SHERIFF WILL TAKE YOU OUT AND HAVE YOU KILLED!
GET OUT OF MY TOWN, MISS HERRIS, AND STAY OUT OF MY LIFE -- OR RUE THE CONSEQUENCES.
GET HER OUT OF HERE, TRUSCOTT!


GET IN.

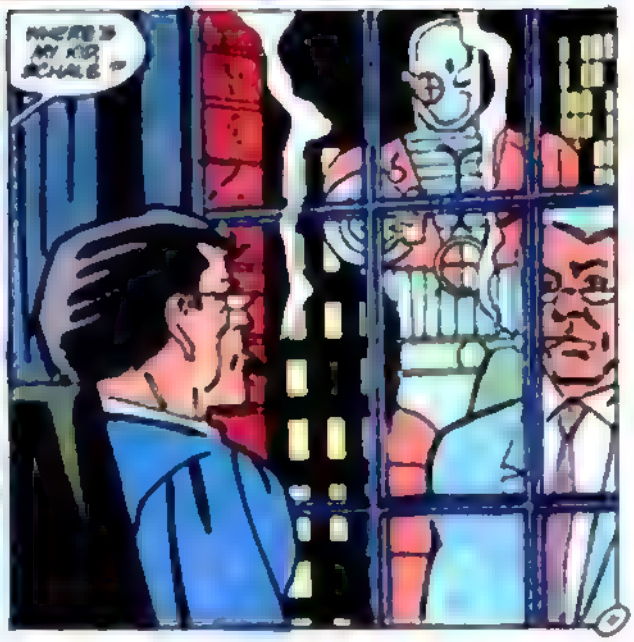

IS HE RIGHT?
WOULD YOU SHOOT ME IF HE TOLD YOU, SHERIFF?
FORGOT IT. CALL ME JOE.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, AT ONE TIME, UNDER A DIFFERENT ADMINISTRATION.
HE STILL HAS ENOUGH CLOUT THAT I SHOW UP WHEN HE SAYS SHOW UP AND KEEP MY TRAP SHUT WHILE I'M WITH HIM.


THESE DAYS, MR. LANYON'S GETTING OLD. IF HE DOESN'T SEE YOU AGAIN OR HEAR YOUR NAME, HE'LL FORGET ABOUT YOU.
I NEED TO FIND OUT SOME INFORMATION. AND I INTEND TO KEEP ON LOOKING.

I FIGURED AS MUCH. SEEMS TO BE THE BEST WAY TO GET RID OF YOU IS TO MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR ANSWERS QUICK.
FEEL LIKE A CUP OF COFFEE AND SOME TALK?

I'M LEAVING, MR. SCHALE UNLESS YOU WANT SOMETHING ELSE?
PHILIP SCHALE AND ASSOCIATES ATTORNEYS
NOT RIGHT NOW BUT STAY NEAR YOUR BEEPER IN CASE I CALL TONIGHT. OKAY, ANDY?
OKAY, MR. SCHALE
'NIGHT, ANDY


WHERE'S MY KID, SCHALE?

LONG TIME NO SEE, FLOYD.
WHERE'S MY KID, SCHALE?

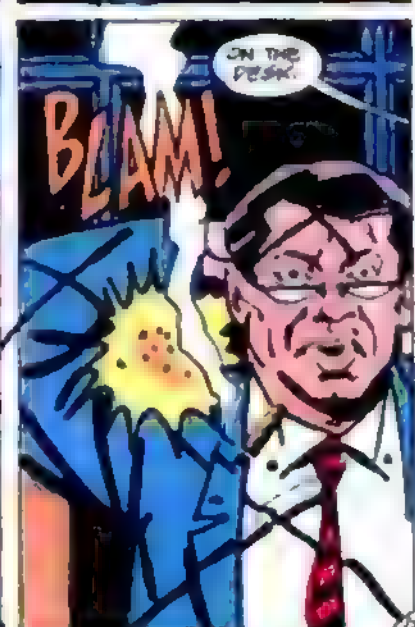
SAFE ENOUGH... FOR THE MOMENT, FLOYD.
ALTHOUGH ONE OF THE MEN GUARDING HIM IS THE SORT OF MAN NO LITTLE BOY SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE WITH. YOU GET MY DRIFT?

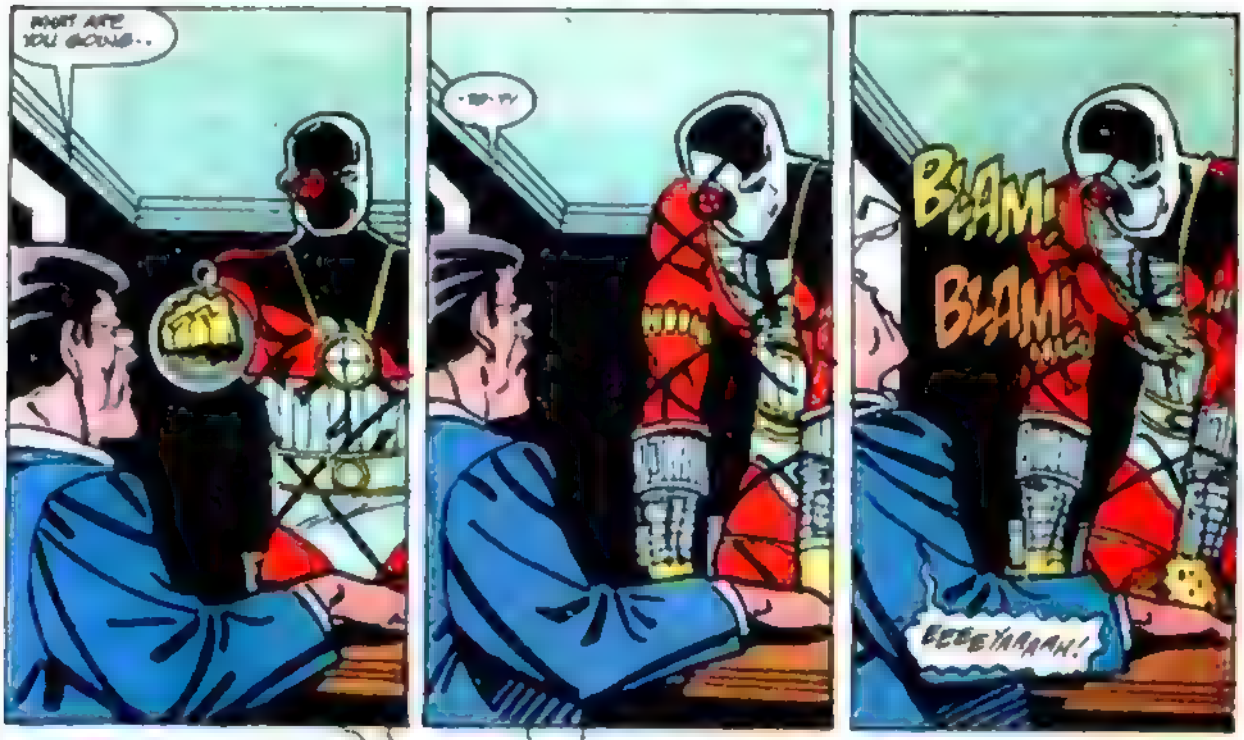
I WANT THE KID BACK WITH HIS MOTHER, SCHALE.
THEN ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FINISH A JOB THAT WAS BEGUN OH, TWENTY YEARS AGO.
YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

KILL ME AND THE KID DIES. GO LOOKING FOR HIM AND I GIVE HIM TO UNCLE WES.
WELL, FLOYD? WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?

PUT YOUR HANDS FALLA DOWN ON THE DESK.

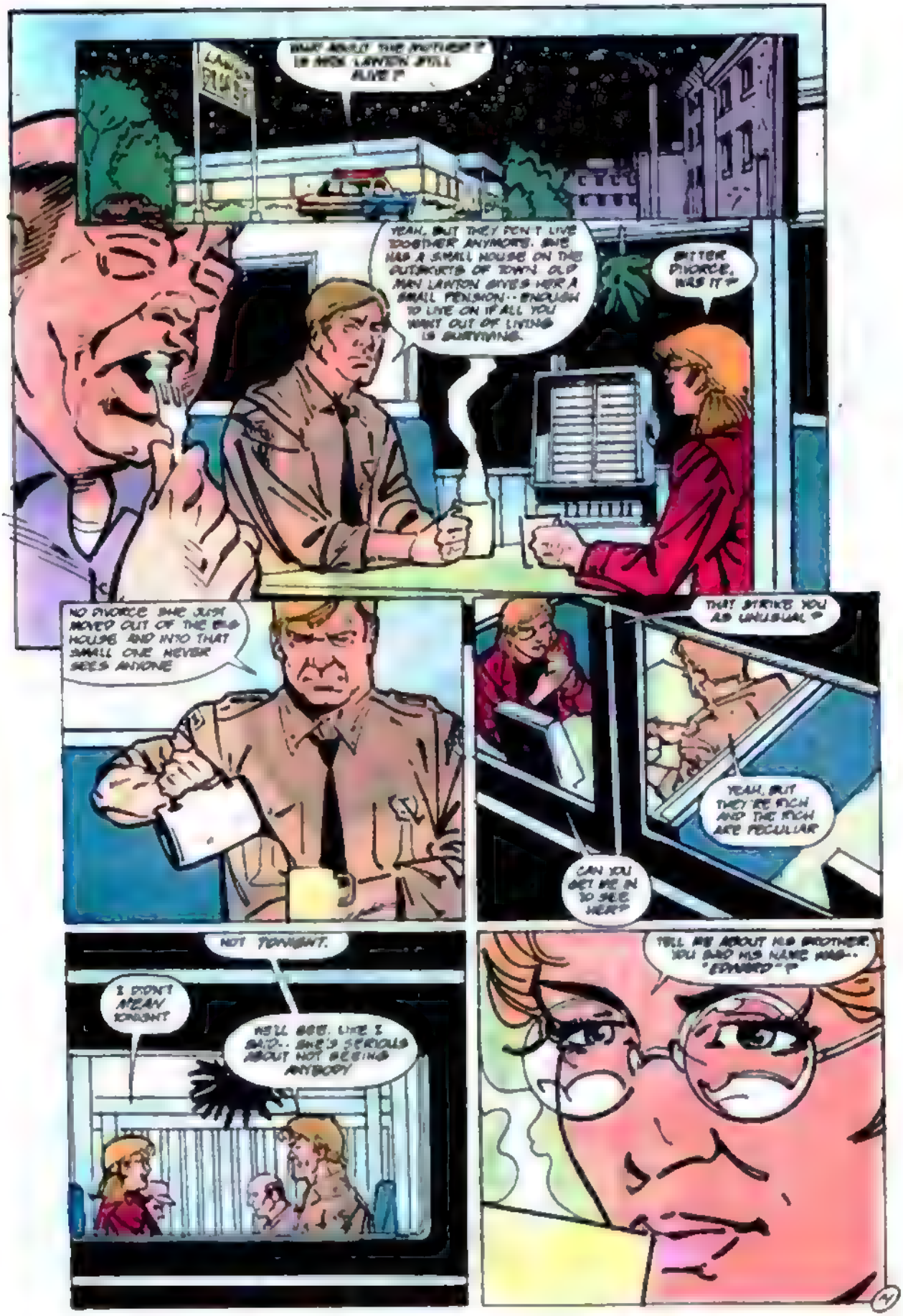
WHY SHOULD I?

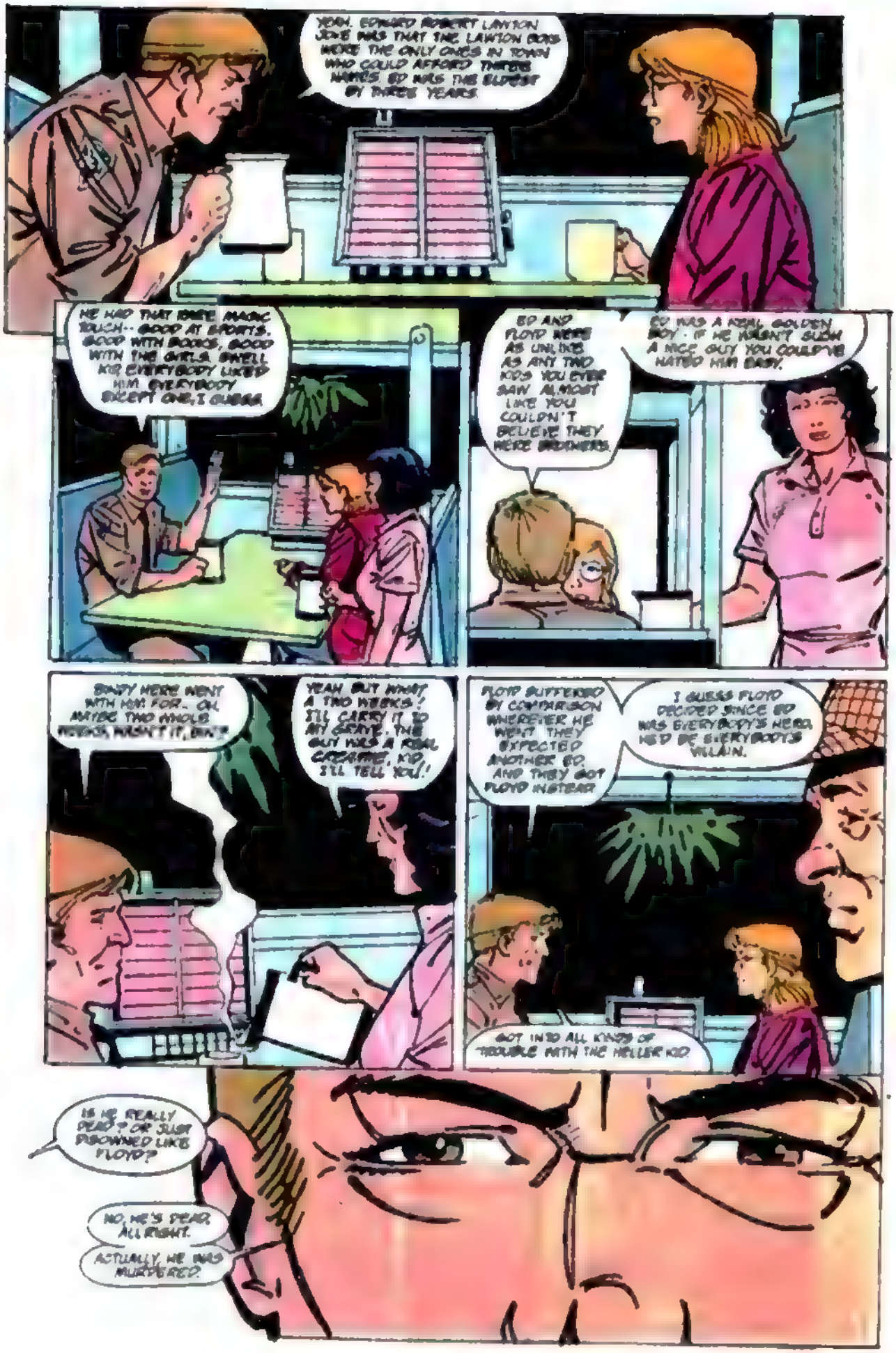

ON THE DESK.
BLAM!

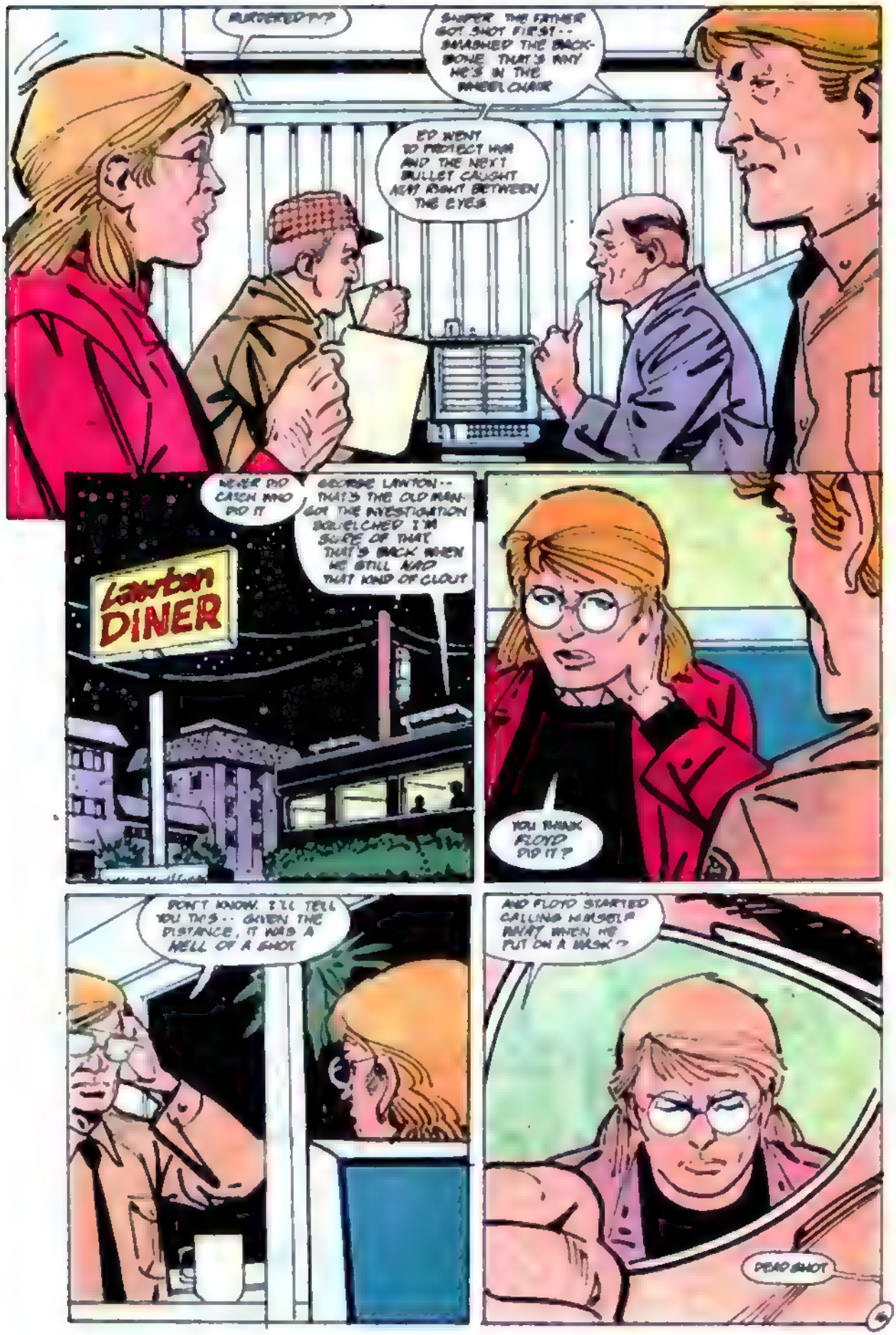

WHAT ARE YOU GOING..
BLAM!
BLAM!
EEEEYAAAAH!

GOT THE ANSWER? OR DO I NEED TO REPEAT IT?
NO!

YOU'RE PLAYING GAMES WITH THE WRONG MAN
PASS IT ON

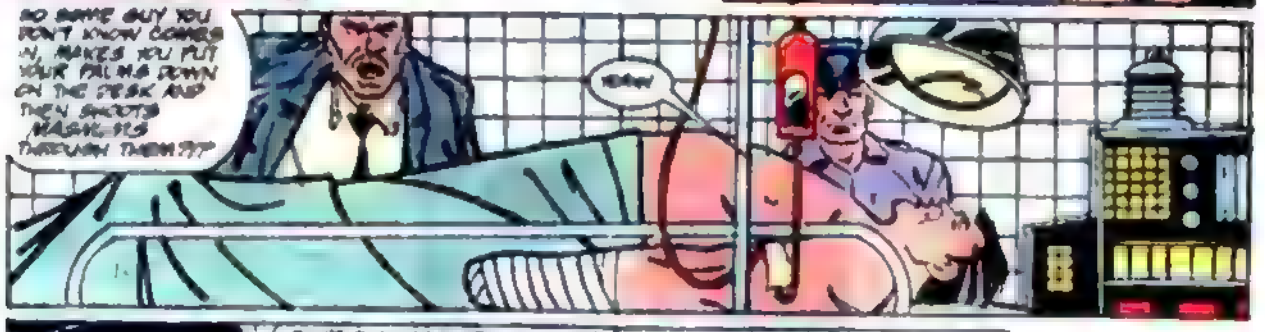

WHAT ABOUT THE MOTHER? IS NICK LAWTON STILL ALIVE?
YEAH, BUT THEY DON'T LIVE TOGETHER ANYMORE. SHE HAS A SMALL HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN. OLD MAN LAWTON GIVES HER A SMALL PENSION.. ENOUGH TO LIVE ON IF ALL YOU WANT OUT OF LIVING IS SURVIVING.
BITTER DIVORCE, WAS IT?
NO DIVORCE. SHE JUST MOVED OUT OF THE BIG HOUSE AND INTO THAT SMALL ONE. NEVER SEES ANYONE
THAT STRIKES YOU AS UNUSUAL?
YEAH, BUT THEY'RE RICH AND THE RICH ARE PECULIAR
CAN YOU GET ME IN TO SEE HER?
NOT TONIGHT.
I DON'T MEAN TONIGHT
WELL, SEE, LIKE I SAID.. SHE'S SERIOUS ABOUT NOT SEEING ANYBODY
TELL ME ABOUT HIS BROTHER. YOU SAID HIS NAME WAS.. "EDWARD"?

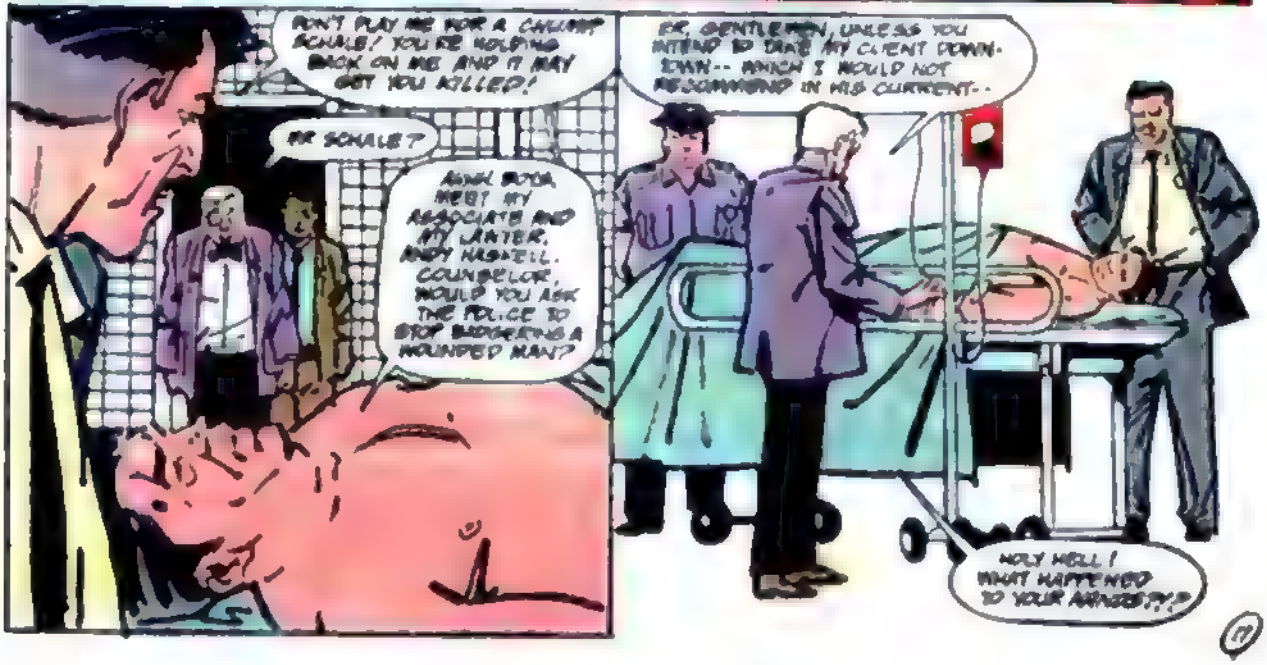

YEAH. EDWARD ROBERT LAWTON. JEEZ WAS THAT THE LAWTON BOYS WERE THE ONLY ONES IN TOWN WHO COULD AFFORD THREE NAMES. ED WAS THE ELDEST BY THREE YEARS.
HE HAD THAT IDIOT MAGIC TOUCH-- GOOD AT SPORTS, GOOD WITH BOOKS, GOOD WITH THE GIRLS. SWELL KID. EVERYBODY LIKED HIM. EVERYBODY EXCEPT ONE, I GUESS.
ED AND FLOYD WERE AS UNLIKE AS ANY TWO KIDS YOU EVER SAW. ALMOST LIKE YOU COULDN'T BELIEVE THEY WERE BROTHERS.
ED WAS A REAL GOLDEN BOY. IF HE WASN'T SUCH A NICE GUY YOU COULD'VE HATED HIM BABY.
BINDY HERE WENT WITH HIM FOR... OH, MAYBE TWO WHOLE WEEKS, WASN'T IT, BINDY?
YEAH, BUT WHAT A TWO WEEKS! I'LL CARRY IT TO MY GRAVE. THE GUY WAS A REAL GENTLEMAN, KID. I'LL TELL YOU!
FLOYD SUFFERED BY COMPARISON WHEREVER HE WENT. THEY EXPECTED ANOTHER ED, AND THEY GOT FLOYD INSTEAD.
I GUESS FLOYD DECIDED SINCE ED WAS EVERYBODY'S HERO, HE'D BE EVERYBODY'S VILLAIN.
GOT INTO ALL KINDS OF TROUBLE WITH THE HELLER KID.
IS HE REALLY DEAD? OR JUST DROWNED LIKE FLOYD?
NO, HE'S DEAD, ALL RIGHT.
ACTUALLY, HE WAS MURDERED.

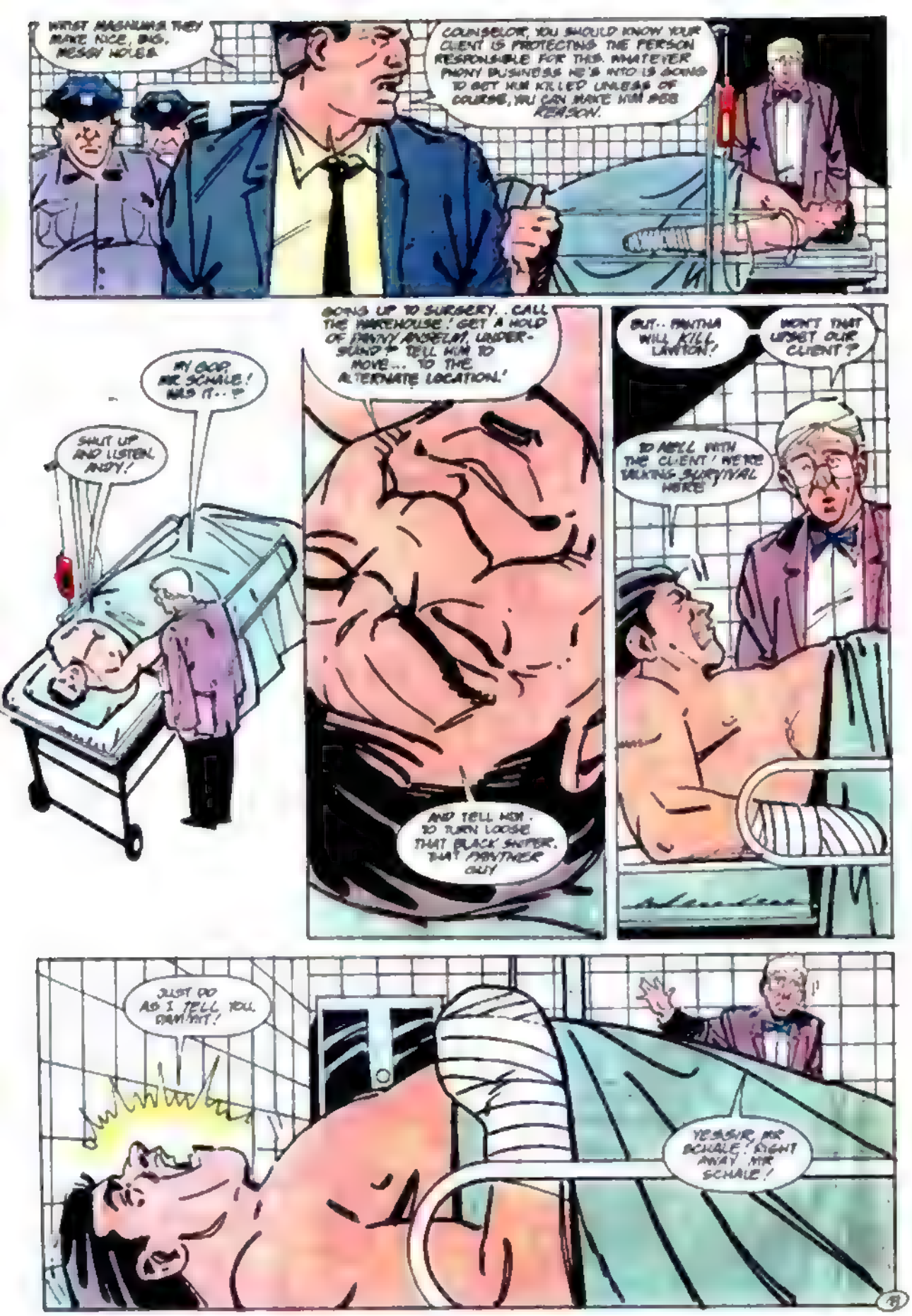

MURDERED?!?
SNIPER. THE FATHER GOT SHOT FIRST -- SMASHED THE BACK-BONE. THAT'S WHY HE'S IN THE WHEELCHAIR.
ED WENT TO PROTECT HIM AND THE NEXT BULLET CAUGHT ALMOST RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES.
NEVER DID CATCH WHO DID IT.
GEORGE LAWTON -- THAT'S THE OLD MAN GOT THE INVESTIGATION BOLLOCHED. I'M SURE OF THAT. THAT'S BACK WHEN HE STILL HAD THAT KIND OF CLOUT.
Lawton DINER
YOU THINK FLOYD DID IT?
DON'T KNOW. I'LL TELL YOU THIS -- GIVEN THE DISTANCE, IT WAS A HELL OF A SHOT.
AND FLOYD STARTED CALLING HIMSELF WHAT WHEN HE PUT ON A MASK?
DEAD SHOT

EMERGENCY
AMBULANCE

I'M ANDY HASKELL, MR. SCHALE'S ASSOCIATE! YOU PAGED ME?
YES. I'M HENRY DUNILL, THE EVENING ADMINISTRATOR. YOUR BOSS IS IN ROOM 2 BEING PREPPED FOR SURGERY. COME WITH ME, PLEASE.


SO SAME GUY YOU DON'T KNOW COMES IN, MAKES YOU PUT YOUR PALMS DOWN ON THE DESK AND THEN SHOOTS HASKELL'S THROUGH THEM?!?
SSSH!


DON'T PLAY ME FOR A CHUMP SCHALE! YOU'RE HOLDING BACK ON ME AND IT MAY GET YOU KILLED!
MR. SCHALE?
ANYL BODY, MEET MY ASSOCIATE AND MY LAWYER, ANDY HASKELL. COUNSELOR, WOULD YOU ASK THE POLICE TO STOP BADGERING A WOUNDED MAN?
OK, GENTLEMEN, UNLESS YOU INTEND TO DRAG MY CLIENT DOWN-STAIRS -- WHICH I WOULD NOT RECOMMEND IN HIS CURRENT--
HOLY HELL! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HANDS?!?

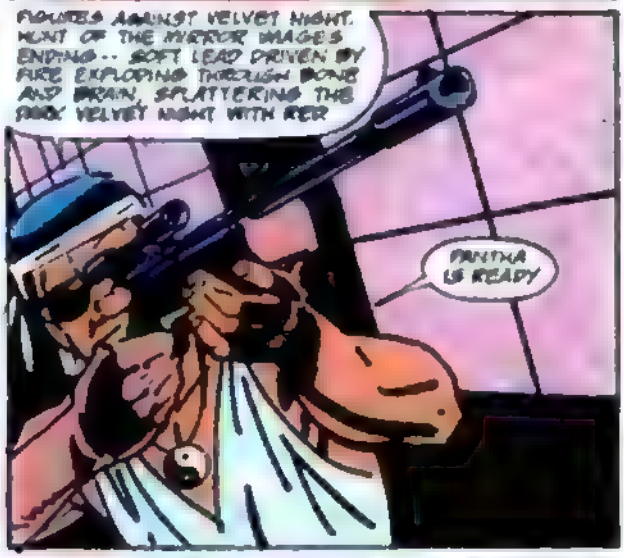

WHAT MAGNUM'S THEY MAKE NICE, BIG, MESSY HOLES.
COUNSELOR, YOU SHOULD KNOW YOUR CLIENT IS PROTECTING THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS. WHATEVER PHONY BUSINESS HE'S INTO IS GOING TO GET HIM KILLED UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU CAN MAKE HIM SEE REASON.
MY GOD, MR. SCHALE! WAS IT..?
SHUT UP AND LISTEN, ANDY!
GOING UP TO SURGERY.. CALL THE WAREHOUSE! GET A HOLD OF PENNY ARSELAT, UNDERSTAND? TELL HIM TO MOVE... TO THE ALTERNATE LOCATION!
AND TELL HIM TO TURN LOOSE THAT BLACK SNIPER, THAT PANTHER GUY!
BUT.. PANTHA WILL KILL LAWTON!
WON'T THAT UPSET OUR CLIENT?
TO HELL WITH THE CLIENT! WE'RE TALKING SURVIVAL HERE!
JUST DO AS I TELL YOU, DAMN IT!
YES SIR, MR. SCHALE! RIGHT AWAY, MR. SCHALE!

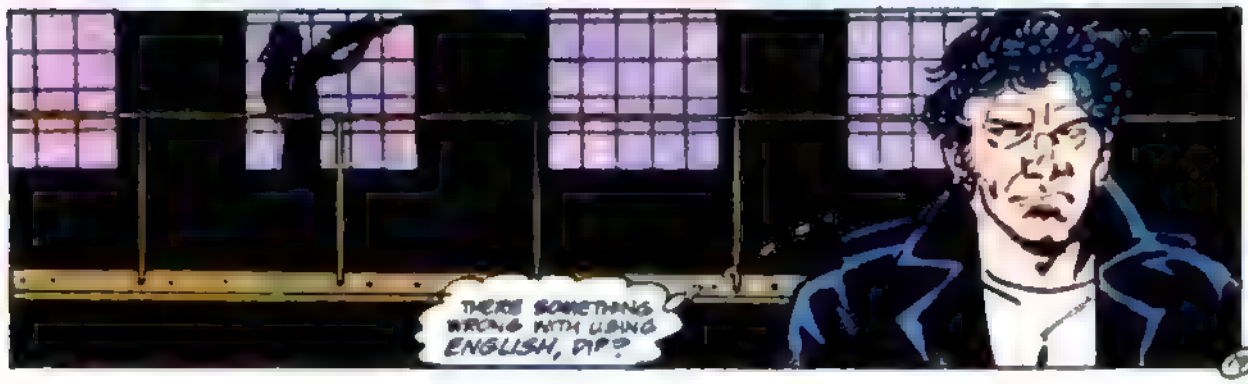
WE DONE WHAT?! OH, CRIPES!
YEAH, YEAH, YEAH... I KNOW WHAT THE DEAL IS, KID! YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME MY JOB!

BREAK UP THE GAME! GET THE GEAR AND THE BOAT! WE'RE SWITCHING BASES!
PANTHA!

HERE

LAWTON'S COMING FOR THE KID! OUR EMPLOYER SAYS YOU'RE TO TAKE HIM OUT! GOT IT?


FIGURES AGAINST VELVET NIGHT. HUNT OF THE MIRROR IMAGES ENDING... SOFT LEAD DRIVEN BY FIRE EXPLODING THROUGH BONE AND BRAIN, SPLATTERING THE BLACK VELVET NIGHT WITH RED
PANTHA IS READY

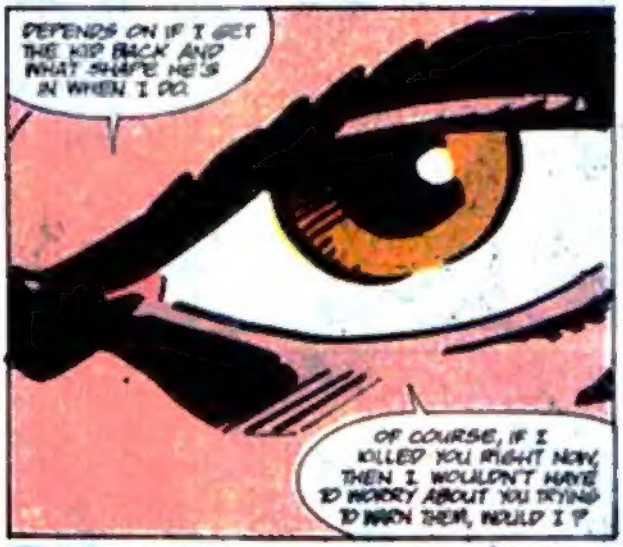

THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH USING ENGLISH, DIP?

WHAT THE HELL HAS SCHALE GOTTEN US INTO?
PARKING
IF THIS IS GOING SOUR, I'D BETTER START THINKING ABOUT SAVING MY OWN BUTT!
EXCUSE ME, BUDDY.
GOT A LIGHT?
LEVEL 2 ROW B
I GUESS.
UHHH... AHHH... UHHHH!
EXIT
THAT'S RIGHT, I'M THE GUY.
WHERE'S THE KID SCHAEFER?

WHAT KID ARE YOU—?
SIDE YOU'RE SCHALE'S ASSISTANT. YOU CAME HERE BECAUSE HE WANTED YOU TO GET WORD TO THE GANG HOLDING THE KID!

YOU'RE IN ON IT. YOU SAW WHAT I DID TO SCHALE. SO ANSWER THE QUESTION.
WHERE'S THE KID STASHED?

FOREMAN BROTHERS WAREHOUSE, CORNER OF 9th AND KENTUCKY. THERE'S ABOUT TWELVE OF THEM, INCLUDING A SNIPER.
ARE YOU GOING TO SHOOT ME?


DEPENDS ON IF I GET THE KID BACK AND WHAT SHAPE HE'S IN WHEN I DO.
OF COURSE, IF I KILLED YOU RIGHT NOW, THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT YOU TRYING TO WARN THEM, WOULD I?

uhhhnnn!
SCAHHHUMP

HEY, KID-- I'M GONNA BORROW YOUR WHEELS. ANY OBJECTIONS?
DIDN'T THINK SO.

OKAY, THE KID RIDES WITH ME.
SCOUT TAKES THE LEAD CAR. JACK TAKES THE VAN. STAY FROSTY! THIS BOZOS PRETTY GOOD.

THE HUNT BEGINS.

DON'T BE AFRAID. EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE.

WHAT A NICE BOY YOU ARE.

NEXT: VICTIMS!

DC COMICS INC.
666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103

JENETTE KAHN President and Publisher
DICK GIORDANO V.P.-Executive Editor
ROBERT GREENBERGER Editor
RICHARD BRUNING Art Director
TERRI CUNNINGHAM Mgr.-Editorial Admin
PAT BASTIENNE Mgr.-Editorial Coordinator
BOB BOZARTH Production Director
PAUL LEVITZ Executive V.P.
JOE ORLANDO V.P.-Creative Director
BRUCE BRISTOW V.P.-Sales & Marketing
MATT RAGONE Circulation Director
PAT CALDON Controller

L-3355

This month, we're still awaiting advanced word on issue #1, so as promised, we're going to meet the creators of this series. John and Luke last got to boast of their backgrounds way back in SUICIDE SQUAD #1, so it's time to bring things up to date. And this will be your first chance to meet Kim Yale, our other partner on the creative side.

JOHN OSTRANDER

Before starting to write comics in the early part of this decade, John was a writer who dabbled in a little of everything. Now, at 39, John is firmly entrenched in comics and is as happy as a clam.

John has done quite a bit of work both on- and offstage, his first love. For example, for fun, John and Kim recently attended a weekend-long marathon performance of Shakespeare's Wars of the Roses play cycle. John has acted on and off over the years, including an annual tradition of his performing in a Chicago-area version of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Joining on stage as Scrooge was his old friend William J. Norris. The two have collaborated elsewhere as well, including their best-known work, *Bloody Bess* (with Stuart Gordon), a swashbuckling tale of piracy on the high seas.

John even wrote a *Doctor Who* stage play that almost made it to the Chicago stage several times, and John remains hopeful that one day it will be performed.

The theater folk in Chicago are one loose-knit group with many people popping in and out of the scene. Many of those people have ended up in comics, including director/writer/actor/oddball Del Close, Mike Gold, Brian Augustyn, Kim Howard Johnson, Kim Yale, and, of course, John Ostrander. It was Mike who helped urge John to stretch himself and try writing for First Comics.

John's first attempt was following Mike Grell's mammoth footsteps on *Starslayer* and from there, he co-created *Grimjack* with Tim Truman. Grimjack's Cynosure led to the creation of the wacky *Munden's Bar* back-up series that has featured a star-studded collection of writers, artists, and characters from around the industry (including a well-received tale featuring a character named after yours truly).

John went on to dialogue MANHUNTER artist Doug Rice's *Dynamo Joe*, and by then, John had made a name for himself in the industry as a fresh voice. It was no surprise that he began branching out and writing for others. John and I met in Atlanta in 1985 and we kept in touch over time until he pitched a Challengers of the Unknown series, which got rejected. Undaunted, John and I brainstormed until he came up with SUICIDE SQUAD. Shortly thereafter, Mike Gold left First for DC Comics and John was brought in to plot LEGENDS. Shrewd John figured out that he could launch the Squad from the mini-series, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Since then, John has been a rather busy boy. He soon after took over writing FIRESTORM and has creatively turned that book around, making it a fascinating read once again. Then he and Mike Gold found a black hole in their schedules and came up with WASTELAND, bringing in Del Close for collaboration. The experimental black humor horror comic continues to this day, usually being the talk of the town whenever an issue debuts. A bit later, John found himself working with Barbara Randall on a revitalization of MANHUNTER via MILLENNIUM. At that point, it was John who suggested co-writing with his then newly wed bride, Kim Yale. They in turn suggested Doug Rice as artist, and the book debuted earlier this year to solid success. John reteamed with his old buddy Tim Truman twice recently, first on a neat three-issue mini-series for Eclipse called *Horspot* and a WASTELAND story.

John and Kim are currently living in wedded bliss, cheerfully jousting with fans on CompuServe and threatening to write their scripts close to deadline. John continues to bubble with ideas, some of which should manifest themselves as comics series in the near future.

KIMBERLY YALE

Bob Greenberger has requested a bio from me, threatening to concoct and print wild stories about me if I refused. So I'm saying from Jump Street that the tale about me, the Dobermans and the Cheeze Whiz is absolutely, categorically, patently *untrue*.

Well ...*most* of it.

Well ...*maybe some* of it.

Well...*never* mind. I've got *other* stories to tell you.

Back in my freshman high school English class, I learned a definition of art that delighted and intrigued me so much that I took it to heart and have nurtured it throughout my life: With art you tell a lie in order to tell the truth. My teacher, Marty Nystrand, who gave this definition, attributed it to Picasso. Recently, I ran across a quote by Jean Cocteau, which states the exact same thought—"One must use a brazen lie in order to convince people of a reality of a higher and deeper order." Now I know both statements are paradoxes, but many things in the creative and spiritual realm seem to instinctively manifest themselves this way. All artists, regardless of the medium they work in, are rendering their vision of the words "Once upon a time..." Telling the story is sitting at a loom where a tapestry of revelation is woven. Those four words can take you through the looking glass, tell you what the thunder said, have you showering in a rundown roadside motel, standing on a scaffold in Paris proclaiming that you go to a far better rest than you have ever known, and wonder as a prince of Denmark if dreams disturb the sleep of the dead. This mini-series is me and John and Luke saying, "Once upon a time there was a man named Floyd Lawton, who was also known as *Deadshot*..."

I suppose I could stop right here and say who I am is tangential to the story, but there are such things as editors (Bobby, put down that whip unless you intend to use it). I suppose I could cram these columns with details like my astrological sign, my favorite color, who my personal heroes are, and how I prefer eating sushi to filet mignon. You're too intelligent for such claptrap. What is applicable here are the experiences in my life that I brought to this story. So this is a biography of relevant experience rather than facts or statistics.

First of all, I'm a preacher's kid and a Navy brat to boot. When I was born, my father was a curate in the Episcopal church; when recalled to active duty in the early '60s he entered the Chaplin Corps as a priest with an officer's rank of lieutenant commander. This meant that on the average my family got orders every two years and we packed up and moved to wherever the Navy in its infinite wisdom decided to station us. To this day I still gauge my childhood by where I was and what grade I was in, and associate people and events with certain bases. I got to see many things traveling on orders that enriched my

life—the Grand Canyon, Carlsbad Caverns, the San Diego Zoo, Indian hogans, Tombstone, Arizona—and the ruins of Pompeii, when my father was stationed with the Sixth Fleet out of Naples, Italy. I also remember the sign in a Memphis laundrymat saying "Whites Only" in 1965 and red paint staining the marble wall of the American Embassy in Naples after an anti-Vietnam War demonstration by college students in 1966. I know how it feels to be on the road, from the wrong side of the tracks, a foreigner and on the outside.

Any sense of stability I had growing up was what I created myself and with my brother. We invented a mythical kingdom using our toys and stuffed animals, making up stories and adventures to entertain ourselves. And there were books, all sorts of books—the Tom Swift Jr. series, *The Four Musketeers*, Winnnie-the-Pooh, Mary Poppins, Lewis Carroll, and the Oz stories—we read that entire series in one summer, I think. Books, mind you—*not* comic books. My parents believed that comic books promoted illiteracy, so they were forbidden. This didn't mean I didn't read them (mostly at other kids' homes), but it was on the sly. It wasn't until college, where I was majoring in English, when I discovered comic books again; another twelve years down the line finds me writing them. Poetry is my first great love, but my interest in theater led me to playwriting, performing, and directing. I try to bring my sense of cadence and rhythm to dialogue, that intangible but crucial element called timing to plot and story.

I believe being a writer is my vocation, or right livelihood, as the Buddha expressed it. I never lost sight of what I wanted to do through hard times and some interesting times, ranging from unloading trucks, a roadie for a week with Rush in Canada, working with Jon Pertwee and Lis Sladen on a national Doctor Who tour (and boy, have I got stories about *that* month on the road!), and the days I carried handcuffs. Yours truly kept body and soul together as a retail store detective, with forays into industrial (dreadful) and hospital (fascinating and harrowing), a total of about five years.

Boy, have I got stories.

Cops, paramedics, court dates, plead bargaining, incessant paperwork, restraining patients, attempted infant kidnapping, corporate incompetence, and apathy—and the persons I've arrested and prosecuted—all have left their indelible mark on me. I know what it's like to have a gun resting on my hip with six extra rounds on the belt—it's an odd feeling, folks.

Which brings me somehow back to comics. It's a unique literary form with both pictures and words, and as Alice said before her adventures down the rabbit hole began, "What is the use of a book without pictures or conversation?" What use, indeed—I would never know the O'Neil/Kaluta SHADOW or the Goodwin/Simonson MANHUNTER or the Ostrander/Truman *Grimjack* and the stories told through a fusion of image and words. There are things I can express and experiences I can relate within this wonderful medium that I couldn't do anywhere else, and I'm glad I've got the opportunity to tell some stories. The DEADSHOT mini-series is one of many. Enjoy the lie, discern the truth.

Once upon a time...

LUKE McDONNELL

Luke has been drawing comics for the better part of a decade and has established himself as one of the most reliable and stylized artists currently working. Only recently has Luke begun to expand his horizons by being more involved with inking, design, and even coloring. The next few years should see Luke continue to impress and amaze, even if he doesn't receive the headlines and critical attention that other names get. His stuff will remain interesting, accessible, and available.

Luke began drawing comics as a hobby after a childhood fascination as a reader. His art continued to progress and improve through high school and into college. After graduation, Luke met J.M. DeMatteis, who suggested Luke try approaching DC and Marvel Comics with his work. Luke was given a one-pager for WEIRD WAR TALES to start with, but Luke tends to discount that as a real beginning. He did, however, approach both companies. Unlike so many other hopefuls, Luke had the right stuff and was immediately offered work. His first assignment was an issue of Marvel's *Star Trek* title, even though he didn't know that much about the series.

In short order, Luke was given a wide variety of pencilling assignments throughout the Marvel Universe. He drew for *Thor Annual*, *Spectacular Spider-Man*, *Micronauts*, and *Star Wars*. Luke only drew one series for Marvel, but it was a long, healthy run on *Iron Man*. Teamed with writer Denny O'Neil and inker Steve Mitchell, they turned around a moribund character and made him one of the best-selling titles at Marvel. However, one day Luke found himself "released" from the assignment and wondering what he would do next.

Fate had him visiting DC one day and he engaged editor Andy Helfer in conversation. It was then that Andy learned that Luke was available, which helped Andy a lot, since he had just inherited JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA but without penciller Chuck Patton. Therefore, Luke was asked to draw the series and he hung in there from issues #244-261, until the title came to its natural end.

As Luke was winding up his JLA commitment, Dick Giordano was pondering John's proposal for the SUICIDE SQUAD. Luke was his first thought as penciller and Luke accepted the assignment. Since then, Luke has been deeply involved with the Squad. He has designed a large number of the covers, Belle Reve prison, *Sheba*, new characters, new costumes, and exotic locales, and all without complaint. He's been enjoying the challenges of portraying a covert government-sponsored team of super-villains.

And yet, he wanted to do more. At first he thought it might be drawing another series, so he accepted Jim Starlin's offer to succeed him as penciller on *Dreadstar* for First Comics. It was fun, but it wasn't what he was looking for.

Then Luke knew what he wanted to do. He wanted to expand his artistic skills by trying his hand as an inker. He did some pieces here and there for WHO'S WHO UPDATE '87, and we talked about giving him an entire issue of the SQUAD to stretch himself. That was issue #14 and one of the best-received issues to date. At that point, John, Kim, and I were kneedeep in plans for DEADSHOT and we needed an artist.

About that time, Luke casually mentioned that he left *Dreadstar*, so I offered him DEADSHOT. Luke asked if he could ink it. I showed him the schedule and he shrugged his shoulders and said, "I can do that." And, amazingly enough, he has not missed a deadline yet. Just when you thought he might slip up, a package arrives containing a completely pencilled story for either DEADSHOT or SUICIDE SQUAD. His inks have come in looking fine, and you can watch Luke grow over these four issues as he refines his technique and watches what happens in the reproduction process.

After Deadshot, the 29-year-old penciller is pondering what his next assignment might be. Most likely it will be to pencil and ink the jungle adventures of THE PHANTOM as that successful mini-series from earlier this year is revived early next year as an ongoing title.

Luke currently lives upstate with his cheerful wife Carole and his two-year-old son, Logan.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Next month, things go from a slow to fast boil as Deadshot finds his son, faces off against Panitha, and learns more about who arranged to disrupt his life so thoroughly. And Marnie Herrs continues to dig into Floyd Lawton's past as she comes face to face with Mom. This will be one very grim, very violent issue, so make sure you eat after the issue.

Meantime, in two weeks, the SUICIDE SQUAD takes a break from serious missions as we deal once and for all with the Mirror Master-Captain Boomerang charade. Check out the issue, courtesy of John, Luke, and Bob Lewis.

We'll see you next time and until then, keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger